



Marin Islands National Wildlife Refuge

Planning Update 1 - Fall 2004

Comprehensive Conservation Planning Begins in the Fall

Save the Date!

Marin Islands CCP Public Scoping Meeting

Join us on
October 19, 2004 from
6:30p.m. to 8:30p.m.
at the Marin Center -
10 Avenue of the Flags
San Rafael, CA 94903

Greetings from the Refuge Manager

Marin Islands National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) is embarking on an important process to develop a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for the Refuge. This plan will help to guide overall refuge management for the next 15 years. Your ideas and comments will be an important part of the process, so I encourage you to participate.

Before we begin the process, I'd like to provide background about the Refuge's history and current management. You'll also find some information about the National Wildlife Refuge System and how comprehensive conservation planning fits into the overall picture of refuge management.

This first "Planning Update" describes the beginning of the planning process and provides information about attending our public scoping meeting to be held on October 19, 2004 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

We will refer to aspects provided in this planning update throughout the CCP process. Please try to read it before our first meeting; this will facilitate the discussion process, especially during our public scoping meeting.

Please join us at the meeting and share your thoughts about the Refuge. We welcome your suggestions, questions and comments. Maps to the meeting location are available, please call Winnie Chan, the Refuge Planner, at (510) 792-0222.

I hope you'll feel free to contact me or Winnie Chan if you have any questions. See page 3 to learn about the CCP and page 6 for our contact information.

Christy Smith
Refuge Manager

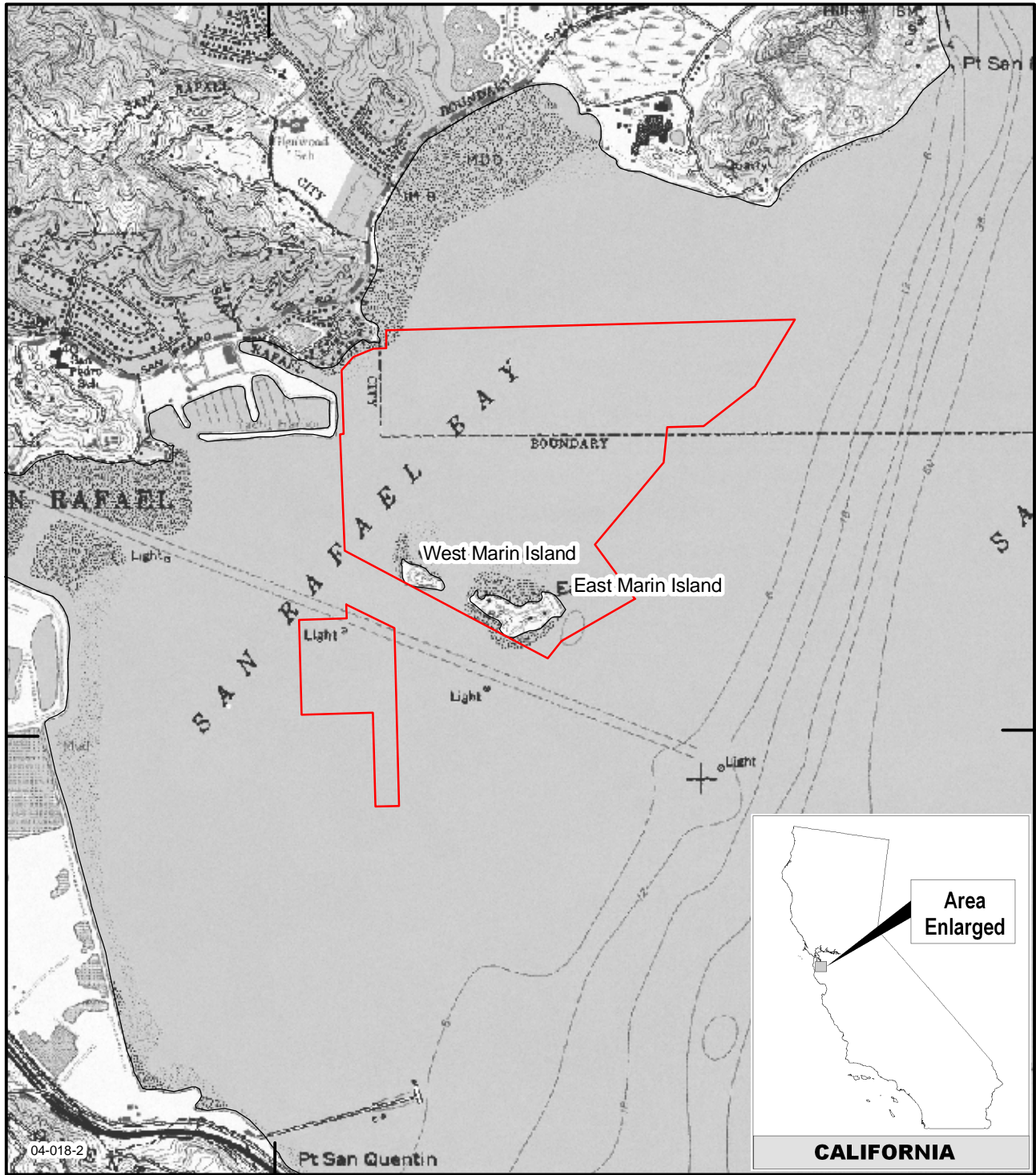
Table of Contents

Refuge Boundary	2
About the Fish and Wildlife Service	3
About the Refuge System	3
Refuge Location, Description, and Purpose	4
What is a CCP?	4
Help Us Plan	5
Contacting Us	6

122°28'48"W

37°57'36"N

37°57'36"N



Marin Islands National Wildlife Refuge

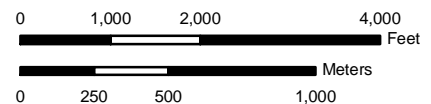
LEGEND

— Approved Refuge Boundary

This map is a visual representation.
It does not represent a surveyed
legal description of the area.



UTM ZONE 10N
NAD 83



Prepared by: Branch of GIS & Cartography
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9/30/04

The Refuge Location and Description

The Refuge is part of the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex, which consists of seven refuges within the San Francisco Bay area. The Refuge is composed of about 340 acres of submerged tidelands and two islands located in San Pablo Bay off the shoreline of San Rafael in Marin County.



The two islands, East Marin Island (10.3 acres) and West Marin Island (2.8 acres), provide migratory bird habitat and have even served as haul-out sites for harbor seals. Historically, Native Americans inhabited the islands. Later, the islands were considered important bases of the U.S. Government for the protection of San Francisco Bay. The islands were later sold for private, residential use. In 1992, the Islands were purchased by public and private sources, and designated a National Wildlife Refuge. Portions of the Refuge, including West Marin Island, are a State Ecological Reserve. The Refuge supports one of the largest heron and egret colonies in northern California. Current management of the Refuge is limited to removal of non-native vegetation, restoration of native vegetation, and prohibition of public access to protect migratory bird nesting.

The Refuge Purpose

The Refuge was established under the authority of the Fish and Wildlife Act for the development, advancement, management, conservation, and protection of fish and wildlife resources. The primary purpose of the Refuge is “to protect an important existing egret and heron rookery on West Marin Island and to increase colonial nesting bird use on East Marin Islands,” as described in the 1992 Environmental Assessment.

What is a CCP?

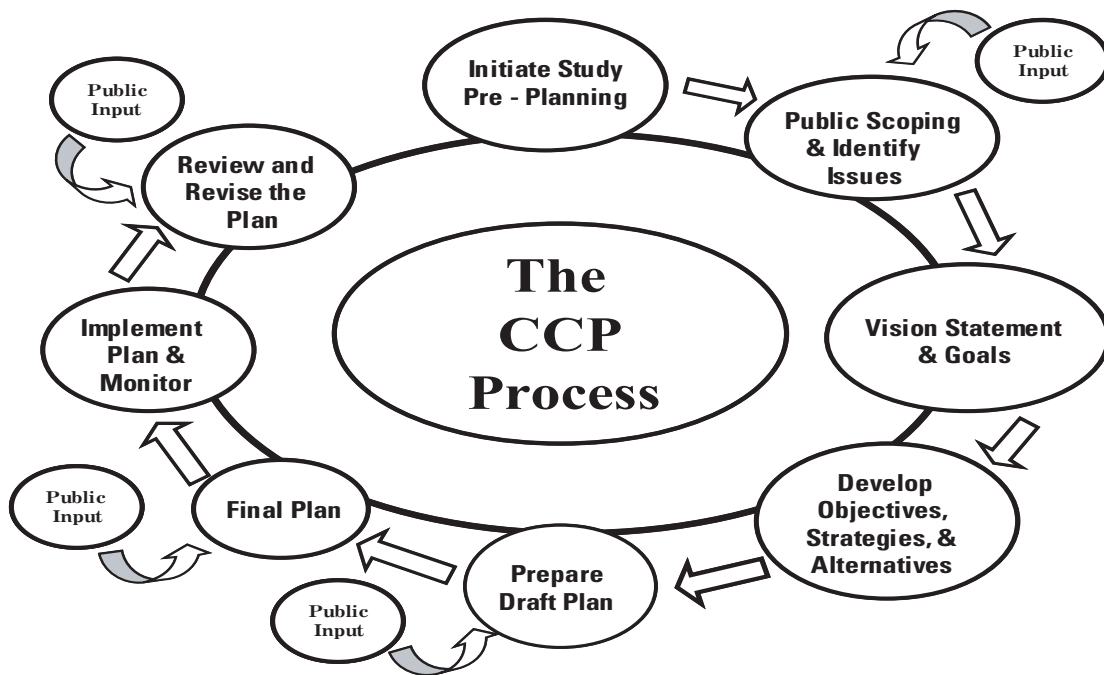
In 1997, Congress passed the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act. The Act defined the mission for the Refuge System, and states that all wildlife refuges must have a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) in place by the year 2012. These plans will provide a 15-year guide, using the best available scientific knowledge, to help managers achieve the purposes for which each refuge was established, and to work toward the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System. The Act provides the Service with guidance for managing refuges in a way that ensures the long-term conservation of fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats. Maintenance of biological integrity and diversity along with facilitating compatible wildlife-dependent recreation in the Refuge System are two of the important principles laid out in the Act.

The CCP for the Marin Islands National Wildlife Refuge will outline goals, objectives and management strategies for the Refuge for a 15-year period. The accompanying Environmental Assessment will describe the alternatives considered and their environmental effects. The Service is preparing this CCP for the following reasons:

- To ensure that management of the Refuge reflects Refuge purposes and the mission, policies and goals of the National Wildlife Refuge System.
- To provide the public with an understanding of the reasons for management actions on the Refuge.
- To provide a vision statement for the Refuge.
- To ensure the compatibility of current and future uses of the Refuge.
- To provide long-term continuity in Refuge management.
- To provide budget justification for operation and maintenance and facility development requests.

The CCP will be flexible and a “living document.” It will be reviewed periodically to ensure that its goals, objectives and implementation strategies and timetables are still appropriate.

The key planning steps are described in the flow chart on the following page. Currently, we are in the pre-planning phase which includes gathering data.



What is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish, wildlife and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

The Service manages the 95-million acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses more than 540 refuges, thousands of small wetlands, and other special management areas.

It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices, and 81 ecological services field stations.

The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their wildlife and habitat conservation efforts.

The Service also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

What is the National Wildlife Refuge System?

In 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt protected an island with nesting pelicans, herons, ibis, and roseate spoonbills in Florida's Indian River from feather collectors decimating their colonies. He established Pelican Island as the nation's first bird sanctuary and went on to establish many other sanctuaries for wildlife during his tenure. This small network of sanctuaries continued to expand, later becoming the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The National Wildlife Refuge System is the largest system of lands in the world dedicated primarily for the conservation of wildlife. It is spread across 50 states, American Samoa, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Johnston Atoll, Midway Atoll, and several other Pacific Islands. About 20.6 million acres in the Refuge System are managed as wilderness under the Wilderness Act of 1964.

What is the mission of the Refuge System?

Refuges are places where wildlife comes first.

“The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.” (National Wildlife Refuge Systems Improvement Act of 1997)

The Service is a “primary use agency.” This means that units of the Refuge System are managed first and foremost for the benefit of fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats. Our mission differs from other federal agencies, such as the U.S. Forest Service, which focuses on forest stewardship and sustainable forest uses; the Bureau of Land Management, which deals with the productivity and multiple use of the land; and the National Park Service, which conserves scenery, wildlife, and historic objects for people’s enjoyment.

Help Us Plan the Future

Over the next year, interested individuals, agencies, Tribes, and organizations are invited to express their concerns and share their visions for the Refuge. We will be sending these planning updates periodically to local constituents, government agencies, private organizations, and other who express interest.

This is your opportunity to help us identify issues and concerns, and for us to answer any questions you may have. Your participation is critical to the success of this planning effort. You will have an opportunity to review and comment on the draft CCP and Environmental Assessment.

A Notice of Intent to initiate the CCP has been published in the Federal Register. The Notice can be accessed via the Internet at: <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html>.

You are invited to a public scoping meeting for the Refuge’s CCP. The date and location of this meeting is listed on the following page. This meeting will provide an opportunity for you to meet with Refuge staff and learn more about the Refuge, the CCP process, and help us identify issues to be addressed in the CCP.

What’s in a name?

The Marin Islands NWR is managed by the Service, which coordinates with California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) on a variety of management issues.

Many people confuse state and federal fish and wildlife agencies because their names are similar. The Service is a federal agency within the U.S. Department of Interior. DFG is a department within the California Resources Agency.

Our names are similar and so are our missions: both agencies are dedicated to wildlife conservation for the benefit of present and future generations. Our jurisdictions are different. The Service is the lead agency responsible for federally-listed species and migratory birds, whether they are located on federal, state, or private lands. The DFG has primary responsibility for resident fish and wildlife on state and private lands, and oversees state-listed species and stream alteration issues throughout California.



Public Scoping Meeting Location

Date:

October 19, 2004

Time:

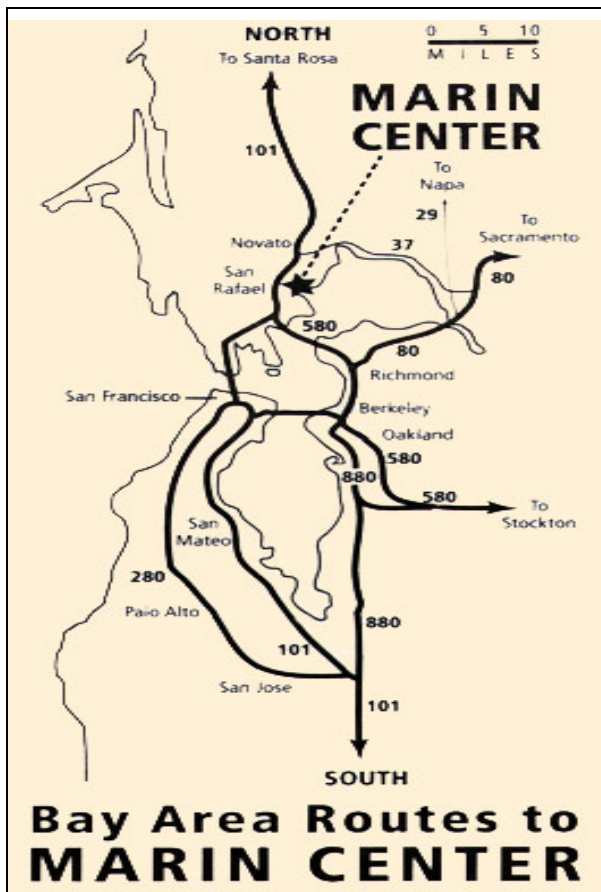
6:30 PM to 8:30 PM

Where:

Marin Center
10 Avenue of the Flags
San Rafael, California, 94903

Directions are available via:

www.co.marin.ca.us/depts/PK/Main/mc/directio.cfm



Please feel free to contact us

We are available to provide additional information regarding the Refuge and the planning process. Feel free to call, write, or e-mail.

If you did not receive this update through the mail and would like to be on our mailing list, please contact us. If you would like to be removed from the list, please let us know.

Winnie Chan, Refuge Planner

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